



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

Hike and Activity Schedule

Northern Rim of the Valley

Spring 2004



“The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful.” – E. E. Cummings

Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority
Ed Davis Park in Towsley Canyon
24255 The Old Road, Newhall, CA 91321
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New Hours at Towsley Nature Center

It's no secret that state government budgets have been cut drastically this year. As a cost-cutting measure, we have closed the Sonia Thompson Nature Center in Towsley Canyon on weekdays. It will remain open on weekends, and is being staffed by our trained volunteers. We will continue to offer our public programs and school programs can be offered by appointment (661-255-2937). We also continue with our trail maintenance programs on Wednesday morning and the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month.

Congratulations To Our Northern Volunteers!

At our Volunteer Banquet last January, Steve Iorger was named MRCA Volunteer of the Year. In addition, Al Dey and Linda Iorger were named Northern Volunteers of the Year. Congratulations to all three for their many hours of service. For those of you interested in becoming a volunteer, contact us at (661) 255-2937 or Towsley@mrca.ca.gov.

Would you like to receive Northern Exposure by e-mail?

Please take a moment to send us your name and e-mail address at Towsley@mrca.ca.gov. As an anti-spam measure, we will not distribute your address to anyone else. Period.

Whitney Canyon Improvements

Stop the presses! Yesterday it was announced that the Santa Clarita Watershed Recreation and Conservation Authority approved a contract with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to continue park improvements at Whitney Canyon. Plans include portable restrooms, picnic tables, a kiosk, an interpretive display, and a park entrance and trail signs. Oak trees and an irrigation system will be added in the lower part of the canyon.

In addition, they will complete a Conceptual Area Protection Plan. This plan is designed to protect the habitat across the Antelope Valley Freeway near Agua Dulce. If approved and funded by the State Wildlife Conservation Board, this will provide a "wildlife corridor" between the San Gabriel and Sierra Pelona mountains. If you want to know more about Wildlife Corridors, come to our program at Whitney Canyon on April 24.

Schedule of Events by Location

For all hikes in burned areas, heavy rain may cancel due to mudslides.

Towsley Canyon. Call (661) 255-2937 for information. Meet at kiosk unless directed otherwise.

Saturday, April 3, 6:30-8:30 PM. Moonlight hike: "Listen.... do you want to know a secret.... do you promise not to tell.... closer". No, this has nothing to do with that old Beatles song. Meet at the front gate to find out.

Saturday, April 17, 8:00-10:00 AM. Morning Bird Walk: "Red Shouldered Hawks are busy parents." Join us for a casual walk. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Saturday, April 24, 7:00-8:00 PM. Evening family campfire: "Tall Tales of California". Meet at Nature Center.

Saturday, May 1, 7:30-9:30 PM. Moonlight hike: "Owl eyes are built to work in low light". Meet at the front gate.

Saturday, May 8, 7:30-8:30 PM. Evening family campfire: "Bats- an insects worst nightmare". Meet at Nature Center.

Saturday, May 15, 8:00-10:00 AM. Morning Bird Walk: "Do birds bathe?" Join us for a casual walk. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Tuesday, June 1, 8:00-9:30 PM. Moonlight hike: "Bats in the belfry." Meet at the front gate.

Saturday, June 5, 8-9 PM. Evening family campfire: "Star stories." Meet at the Nature Center.

East/Rice Canyon. Call (661) 255-2937 for information. Meet at kiosk unless directed otherwise.

Saturday, April 17, 9:00-11:00AM. Fire has an unexpected effect on plants.

Saturday, May 29, 9:00-11:00 AM. Fire – did it affect the flowers?

Sunday, June 27, 8:00-10:00AM. Increasing the harvest: why the Native Americans used fire.

Pico Canyon. Call (661) 255-2937 for information. Meet at gate unless directed otherwise.

Saturday, May 22, 9:00-11:00 AM. Animals leave traces of their passing.

Whitney Canyon. Call (661) 255-2937 for information. Meet at kiosk unless directed otherwise.

Saturday, April 24, 8:30-10:30 AM. Wildlife corridors: animals CAN get there from here.

Sunday, May 23, 9:00-11:00 AM. Meet the first Santa Claritas in Whitney Canyon.

Sage Ranch. Call (661) 255-2937 for information. Meet at entrance to Sage Ranch above Santa Susana. Bring your children but not your dog.

Saturday, April 17, 9:30-12:00 PM. Poisonous Plants. Identify plants that produce undesirable consequences when touched or eaten: poison oak, yellow star thistle, turkey mullein, datura, etc. A 3-mile R/T, 100' elevation gain/loss hike. Meet at park entrance or call (805) 492-2184 for meeting place in Thousand Oaks.

Saturday, May 1, 9:30-12:00 PM. Alien Plants. Identify both friendly and invasive non-native plants: tree tobacco, rip gut, blue gum, ouch weed, etc. A 3-mile R/T, 100' elevation gain/loss hike. Meet at park entrance or call (805) 492-2184 for meeting place in Thousand Oaks.

Saturday, June 6, 2:30-5:00 PM. Late spring flowers. Learn to enjoy walking in the wild by smelling fragrances, touching the textures, and delighting in the colors. A 3-mile R/T hike. Meet at park entrance or call (805) 492-2184 for meeting place in Thousand Oaks.

Happy Camp Call (661) 255-2937 for information unless otherwise noted. Read "Directions" for location.

Saturday, April 17, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM. Happy Camp and Beyond. Moderate hike (8-9 mi R/T; 1300 ft gain/loss) to see panoramic views of Moorpark to the Channel Islands. Wear boots; bring lunch and 2-3 qts water per person and binoculars. Call (805) 529-4828 for more information.

Saturday, April 24, 9:00-12:00 AM. Plants can't run but they can race.

Saturday, May 29, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM. Happy Camp and Beyond. See April 17 description for details.

Saturday, June 19, 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM. Happy Camp and Beyond. See April 17 description for details.

Come check out our Newest Park

Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson Ranch). The Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy acquired Ahmanson Ranch in November 2003. It is a critical ecological linkage and wildlife corridor through the Simi Hills between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Santa Susana Mountains. It is home to the endangered California red-legged frog and one of two known populations of the recently rediscovered San Fernando Valley spineflower. It's also a GREAT place to hike. We are now offering public interpretive programs. Call (661) 255-2937 or wendy.langhans@mrca.ca.gov for more information.

All hikes are 1-3 miles in length and suitable for families. Meet at the Las Virgenes Canyon Road Trailhead, 1 mile North of 101. Please bring plenty of water and wear proper shoes. The nearest public restroom facility is at Gates Canyon Park, about 1 mile east of Las Virgenes Canyon Road on Thousand Oaks Boulevard.

Sat., Mar 13	2-4 PM	Wildlife Corridors: Animal can get there from here.
Sat., Mar 27	2-4 PM	Wildflowers Flirt with the Birds and Bees.
Sat., April 3	6-8 PM	Nearly Full Moon Hike
Sat., April 10	8-10 AM	Bird Walk – in cooperation with Audubon Soc.
Sat., April 17	2-4 PM	Red-Tailed Hawks use their eyes to survive.
Sat., April 24	10 AM -1 PM	Wildflowers – in cooperation with CNPS
Sun., May 2	6:30-8:30 PM	Nearly Full Moon Hike
Sat., May 15	2-4 PM	Red-legged frogs are tenacious survivors.
Sat., May 22	8-10 AM	Bird Walk – in cooperation with Audubon Soc.
Tues., June 1	7-9 PM	Full Moon Hike
Sat., June 19	9-11 AM	The Acorn doesn't fall far from the tree.
Sat., Jun 26	8-10 AM	Bird Walk – in cooperation with Audubon Soc.

Directions

Happy Camp Canyon: (15100 Happy Camp Canyon Rd., Moorpark). From 101 Freeway, take (23) Freeway north, connecting to go on (118) freeway EAST; and from westbound (118) Freeway exit at Los Angeles Ave/Princeton Ave (NOT New Los Angeles Ave.). Turn NORTH on Princeton Ave. (Do not take LA Ave.) Go two blocks to Campus Park Dr. Turn Left, past two more blocks and straight into park at Rustic Canyon Golf Course sign and gate. Follow paved road and park in golf course parking lot where docent(s) will meet you (about 1 mile from park entrance).

Sage Ranch: In Woodland Hills, from Highway 101, exit Valley Circle heading north. From Simi Valley exit Topanga Blvd, west on Plummer to Valley Circle heading south. Head to Woolsey Canyon intersection. Turn and follow the signs to Boeing & Sage. Turn right at the top of the hill onto Black Canyon Road. The entrance to the park is 200 feet from the intersection. Park inside the gate.

Rocky Peak: From the San Fernando Valley, head west on the 118 Fwy, exit Rocky Peak Rd. Meet at north end of bridge. From Simi Valley, head east on the 118 and exit at Kuehner Rd. Go south past three stop lights and up the hill to bridge crossing. Call 805-492-2184 for more.

Towsley Canyon Park: Traveling north through Santa Clarita, take the Calgrove exit from the Golden State Freeway (Interstate 5). Turn west back under the freeway and take the Old Road south, proceed to the first driveway on your right. Look for the sign: "Ed Davis Park at Towsley Canyon." Park in back lot and meet at kiosk for hikes; nature center for campfires.

East/Rice Canyon: Traveling north through Santa Clarita, take the Calgrove exit from the Golden State Freeway (Interstate 5). Turn west back under the freeway and take the Old Road south, driving about 1 mile. The trailhead is about 300 yards south of the Church of Nazarene. Look for the sign: "Santa Clarita Woodlands: East Canyon/Rice Canyon Entrance." Park on frontage road.

Pico Canyon: Traveling north through Santa Clarita, take the Pico/Lyons exit from the Golden State Freeway (Interstate 5). Go west on Pico Canyon Road. There is road construction on Pico Canyon Road, so directions may change. Contact (661) 255-3606 for the latest information.

Whitney Canyon: Traveling north on the Antelope Valley Freeway (Highway 14), take the San Fernando Road exit. Proceed east to the Park and Ride lot. Meet at gate.